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ABSTRACT

Previous research has investigated the role of personal faith and locus of control in attribution. To expand these investigations to include the role of Quest faith (a personal struggle to understand), 154 undergraduates (57 males, 97 females) participated in a study. Participants were those who ranked themselves at least 4 out of 7 on a pre-selection religiosity self-rating sheet and attended church at least once a month. Subjects also completed questionnaires measuring forms of personal faith and locus of control. Attributional tendencies were determined from subjects' ratings of 12 vignettes for the involvement of self, others, chance, and God. Analysis of results showed that intrinsic religion correlated positively with God control and negatively with chance in specific circumstances and with chance and powerful others on the general scales. Extrinsic religion affiliated positively with overall control by chance and powerful others. Quest faith associated positively with control by self for favorable outcomes only and with chance for both favorable and unfavorable outcomes. The nature of the correlations among Intrinsic, Extrinsic, and Quest forms of faith does not appear to explain the pattern of associations with Quest faith. (MCF)

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# Form of Personal Faith and General and Specific Locus of Control

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Increasingly, in the past 20 years, the concept of religiosity has been considered multidimensional. The theory that has received the most attention is that of Allport (1959, 1966; Allport and Ross, 1967) which distinguishes between Intrinsic and Extrinsic religious orientations. To the person displaying Intrinsic religiosity, religion is the master motive in life. Their faith is religion as lived; all aspects of life are referenced to it. Extrinsic faith, on the other hand, is utilitarian; it is one among many means to an end rather than the end itself. Religion is thus used to achieve other goals such as status, friendship, or economic gain (Hunt and King, 1971). More recently, C. Daniel Batson (1971, 1976, Batson and Ventis, 1982) has proposed a third way of being religious: Quest faith. This is characterized by searching, doubt, and self-examination. The person with a Quest orientation is unlikely to hold orthodox patterns of belief or to be satisfied with any given set of answers.



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Central to religion is the issue of control. Rotter (1966) suggested that one's life can be viewed along a continuum from internal to external control; a person displaying external control is really displaying a lack of control. Levenson (1973a; 1973b; 1974) extended these concepts to define more clearly external control in terms of the broad roles of powerful others and chance. Later, God control was added by Kopplin (1976). Within this system, the current attributional options that are now available are self, powerful others, God, and chance.

Because religion is a significant aspect of outlook on life, it should relate to and probably influence one's sense of control. In fact, some recent theoretical formulations have suggested a number of potential roles for religion relative to control (Rothbaum, Weisz, and Snyder, 1982; Weisz, Rothbaum, and Blackburn, 1984). These formulations have, however, not considered the form of personal faith.

Due to the importance of faith in Intrinsic religion, God should be conceived of as playing a primary control role. The Intrinsically religious person may therefore make personal control a secondary consideration (and may indeed be striving to "let go and let God take charge"). Also, with God in control, the influence of others and chance should be reduced. In fact, when people believe God is in control, chance, luck, and powerful others are not seen as not having any effect (Silvestri, 1979). It is thus hypothesized: 1) Intrinsic religion will correlate

positively with God control, and 2) negatively to control by powerful others and chance. Within different belief systems, the role of the individual varies. Since Intrinsically religious people have internalized their faith, their view of individual control should vary; therefore, no relation to internal control is expected.

To the Extrinsic religionist, outside forces play a major role. Such persons look to religion for support and aid, and therefore should feel a lack of internal power and influence. Minton and Spilka (1976) did observe that powerlessness correlates positively with Extrinsic religion. Because those with an Extrinsic orientation usually do not feel that they exercise control over their lives, they tend to expect external control (Strickland and Shaffer, 1971). Two hypotheses regarding Extrinsic religious orientation are thus suggested: Hypothesis 3) Extrinsic religion will correlate positively with control by powerful others and chance, and 4) correlate negatively with internal control and God control.

It is claimed that Quest religion is a personal struggle to understand. Self-examination and doubt are problems for internal control. Therefore, it is theorized that Quest religion will relate positively to internal control (hypothesis 5), and negatively to other, chance, and God forms of control (hypothesis 6).

The present study seeks to assess the above hypotheses for both general and specific expressions of control. In other words, one's orientation to religion is expected to influence both general outlook and causal attributions made in individual situations. Locus of control scales can be defined as measuring the overall control perspective a person has: those forces the individual assumes to be in control. When faced with a specific occurrence, a choice as to what to attribute causality must be made. Spilka and Schmidt (1983a, 1983b) investigated the role of personal faith and locus of control in attribution. The present study hopes to replicate their findings, as well as expand the scope of investigation in this area to include a Quest faith orientation.

## Method

### Sample

Students at the University of Denver, who were fulfilling a course requirement for introductory psychology, participated in this study. As a pre-selection measure, the volunteers were given a religiosity self-rating sheet. They were asked to provide their religious affiliation, to indicate how often they attend church, and to rate their religiousness on a seven point scale. The 154 participants who ranked themselves at least 4 out of 7 on the religiousness scale and attended church at least once a month

were used. The sample had a mean religiosity self-rating of 5.1 with a standard deviation of 1.00 and had a mean church attendance of 2.5 times a month. The sample contained 57 males and 97 females with a mean age of 18.5 years; all were Christian.

## Measures

Participants were administered several questionnaires to measure the various forms of personal faith and to determine their locus of control and attributional tendencies. Religious orientation was assessed through the Allport and Ross (1967) Intrinsic and Extrinsic scale and the Batson (Batson and Ventis, 1982) interactional scale (used to determine Quest faith). The Kopplin (1976) revision of the Levenson (1973a, 1973b) locus of control scale was employed to find general control outlooks. Situational attributions were determined by 12 vignettes used by Spilka and Schmidt (1983a) in previous research. After reading each story, the respondent was asked to rate the involvement of self, others, chance, and God on 5 point Likert scales.

## Results

Hypothesis one, that Intrinsic religion would correlate positively with God control, was supported both for the locus of control scales and the attributional vignettes. These findings

indicate that those with an Intrinsic faith believe that God is in control generally. They also attribute causality to God in specific circumstances. The second hypothesis also obtained support in that an Intrinsic orientation associated negatively with chance in specific instances and with chance and powerful others on the general scales.

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Tables 1 and 2 about here

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For Extrinsic religion, only hypothesis 3 achieved support. Extrinsic tendencies positively affiliated with overall control by chance and powerful others. For the specific vignettes, Extrinsic faith affiliated significantly and positively with chance. No meaningful relationships were observed between Extrinsic faith and God or internal control (hypothesis 4).

Neither of the hypotheses regarding Quest religion and general locus of control (hypotheses 5 and 6) gained support. Relative to the specific attributions, Quest associated positively with self for favorable outcomes only and with chance for both favorable and unfavorable outcomes. Other-involvement also showed significant association with Quest faith.

The results for Intrinsic and Extrinsic scales confirm previous work in this area (Minton and Spilka; 1976, Silvestri, 1979, Spilka and Schmidt, 1983a, and Strickland and Shaffer, 1971); Quest however merits further consideration as it did not correlate significantly with any of the general forms of locus of control. This suggests that the searching and self-examination aspect of the Quest oriented person may not reflect any consistently patterned internal motivation for control. Another possibility may lie in the lack of variation within Quest. This may be a function of the method of participant selection. The sample only contained students who attended church at least once a month. Those having a Quest orientation are less likely to be churchgoers, and therefore may not appear in a sample using church attendance as a selection criteria. This selection procedure may thus have also affected the reliability of the Quest instrument. In fact, the interactional scale used to determine Quest demonstrated an internal consistency reliability of .58. Though low, this still suggests some meaningful variation across participants, but possibly not enough to produce the theorized significant covariation with the locus of control scales.

Despite the lack of affiliation with any general measure of locus of control, a pattern of significant correlations between Quest faith and the vignettes is observed. These results show that the greater the Quest orientation of a person, the more likely they are to invoke self, other, and chance attributions in

specific situations. Persons with a Quest orientation may therefore not be differentiating among possible explanations of causality or be seeing a potential for a variety of causes or sources of control.

## Discussion

Attributions of causality to others on the Spilka-Schmidt (1983b) specific locus of control vignettes tend to possess low reliability (Spilka and Schmidt, 1983b). This may explain the unaccountable relationships for the attributions relative to Quest faith. In order to understand these findings, we might first look at the characteristics of the control and attribution measures.

The correlations between the measures for general and specific locus of control indicate that the vignettes may well represent specific illustrations of general locus of control, as determined by the Kopplin (1975) revision of the Levenson (1973a, 1973b) scales. This also confirms the Spilka and Schmidt (1983b) findings. Attributions to self strongly affiliated with internal control, and positive self attributions showed a negative relationship with God control. Chance attributions correlated positively with both powerful other and chance control and negatively with God control. Attributions to God showed a negative associa-

tion with internal control and very strong positive ones with God control.

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Tables 3, 4, and 5 about here

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The intercorrelations for the general locus of control scales showed a moderate to strong affiliation between powerful other and chance control. This suggests that those two scales may overlap considerably; God and internal attributions correlated negatively. It appears that attributing causality to God may decrease the chances of attributing causality to oneself.

Table 5 presents a complex pattern of intercorrelations among the specific attribution measures, somewhat similer to those among the general locus of control scales. Though these relationships merit further study, they do not appear productive in explaining the correlations with form of personal faith.

The nature of the correlations among Intrinsic, Extrinsic, and Quest forms of personal faith do not appear to explain the pattern of associations with Quest religion. Quest does not affiliate with Intrinsic religion, but does show a significant, positive relationship with Extrinsic orientation. The correla-

tion between Extrinsic and Quest, however, is low, and the only instance in which it looks like it could affect a Quest relationship is with chance attributions; the strength of the association indicates that the Extrinsic/Quest affiliation is probably not the sole cause. Therefore, Quest does not seem to be explainable in terms of Intrinsic and Extrinsic religion.

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Table 6 about here

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## Conclusions

The results of this study indicate that the Quest form of personal faith does not follow the theorized pattern. What does Quest look like? Quest seems independent of God control. Someone with a Quest orientation places causality on chance, much like one with an Extrinsic faith may do. Unlike an Extrinsic religionist, a person displaying Quest religion may be willing to take personal credit when the outcome is positive but not when it is negative. There is also a suggestion that Quest faith may not be motivated by any specific control pattern. Further study into these possibilities is needed.

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## Tables

Table 1: Form of personal faith and general locus of control

N = 141

| | Form of Personal Faith | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Control | Intrinsic | Extrinsic | Quest |
| Internal | -.147 | .173 | .125 |
| P. Others | -.191x | .225xx | .025 |
| Chance | -.179x | .330xx | .046 |
| God | .591xx | -.112 | .054 |

Table 2: Form of Personal Faith and Situational Attributions

N = 137

| | Form of Personal Faith: | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Attributions: | Intrinsic | Extrinsic | Quest |
| Self Neg. | .051 | .042 | .160 |
| Self Pos. | -.047 | .108 | .352xx |
| Other Neg. | .122 | .164 | .175x |
| Other Pos. | .064 | .133 | .226xx |
| Chance Neg. | -.217x | .433xx | .232xx |
| Chance Pos. | -.213x | .426xx | .254xx |
| God Neg. | .437xx | -.037 | .058 |
| God Pos. | .549xx | -.051 | .102 |

note: x = $p < .05$
xx = $p < .01$

Table 3: Locus of Control and Situational Attributions

N = 148

| | Attributions | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control | Self+ | Self- | Other+ | Other- | Chance+ | Chance- | God+ | God- |
| Internal | .502xx | .317xx | .260xx | .226xx | .114 | .081 | -.245xx | -.298xx |
| P.Other | -.029 | .090 | .084 | .092 | .205x | .188x | .019 | .069 |
| Chance | -.023 | -.047 | .069 | .030 | .419xx | .474xx | .014 | .056 |
| God | -.201x | -.117 | -.131 | -.078 | -.175x | -.170x | .718xx | .650xx |

note: x = p < .05
xx = p < .01

Table 4: Locus of Control intercorrelations

N = 152

| | Powerful Other | Chance | God |
|---|---|---|---|
| Internal | -.105 | -.115 | -.285xx |
| P. Other | | .490xx | .034 |
| Chance | | | -.059 |

note: xx = p < .01

Table 5: Attribution intercorrelations

N ranges 148-150

| | Self- | Other+ | Other- | Chance+ | Chance- | God+ | God- |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Self+ | .615xx | .574xx | .463xx | .233xx | .184x | -.112 | -.131 |
| Self- | | .446xx | .536xx | .203x | .145 | -.010 | -.009 |
| Other+ | | | .616xx | .258xx | .218xx | .043 | .013 |
| Other- | | | | .279xx | .250xx | .151 | .144 |
| Chance+ | | | | | .842xx | .116 | .031 |
| Chance- | | | | | | .110 | .103 |
| God+ | | | | | | | .820xx |

Table 6: Form of Personal Faith Intercorrelations

N = 141

| | Extrinsic | Quest |
|---|---|---|
| Intrinsic | -.209x | .139 |
| Extrinsic | | .171x |

note: x = $p < .05$